

Employee Post-Travel Disclosure of Travel Expenses

Date/Time Stamp:

SECRETARY OF THE SENATE

Post-Travel Filing Instructions: Complete this form within 30 days of returning from travel. Submit all forms to the Office of Public Records in 232 Hart Building.

17 SEP -5 PM 3: 00

In compliance with Rule 35.2(a) and (c), I make the following disclosures with respect to travel expenses that have been or will be reimbursed/paid for me. I also certify that I have attached:

- ☒ The original *Employee Pre-Travel Authorization* (Form RE-1), AND
☒ A copy of the *Private Sponsor Travel Certification Form* with all attachments (itinerary, invitee list, etc.)

Private Sponsor(s) (list all): The Aspen Institute

Travel date(s): August 8-10, 2017

Name of accompanying family member (if any): N/A

Relationship to Traveler: ☐ Spouse ☐ Child

IF THE COST OF LODGING DID NOT INCREASE DUE TO THE ACCOMPANYING SPOUSE OR DEPENDENT CHILD, ONLY INCLUDE LODGING COSTS IN EMPLOYEE EXPENSES. (Attach additional pages if necessary.)

Expenses for Employee:

	Transportation Expenses	Lodging Expenses	Meal Expenses	Other Expenses (Amount & Description)
<input type="checkbox"/> Good Faith Estimate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Actual Amount	\$ 70.62	\$ 234.00 for 2 nights	\$ 172.50	\$ 191.26 conference room fees

Expenses for Accompanying Spouse or Dependent Child (if applicable):

	Transportation Expenses	Lodging Expenses	Meal Expenses	Other Expenses (Amount & Description)
<input type="checkbox"/> Good Faith Estimate <input type="checkbox"/> Actual Amount				

Provide a description of all meetings and events attended. See Senate Rule 35.2(c)(6). (Attach additional pages if necessary.):

Agenda attached

9/5/17
(Date)

Matthew J Stern
(Printed name of traveler)

[Signature]
(Signature of traveler)

TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISING MEMBER/OFFICER:

I have made a determination that the expenses set out above in connections with travel described in the *Employee Pre-Travel Authorization* form, are necessary transportation, lodging, and related expenses as defined in Rule 35.

9/5/17
(Date)

Lamar Alexander
(Signature of Supervising Senator/Officer)

Dear Senate Colleague,

At this convening, staffers will hear from state and district leaders on early implementation lessons of the Every Student Succeeds Act. Staffers will understand how states are creating and implementing their ESSA plans, including their theories of action around the design of their accountability systems, their approaches to school improvement, and the development of the indicator on English learners. The convening will also focus on potential roles for Congress and the U.S. Department of Education in monitoring and guidance around ESSA implementation. Finally, the retreat will provide an opportunity for staffers to engage in their own learning and build working relationships with colleagues from different parties and chambers and with leading experts in the field.

We fully comply with the rules that have been enacted by the Senate regarding privately-funded travel. Enclosed you will find all the forms necessary for Ethics rules compliance:

- A detailed agenda listing discussion sessions
- A completed Private Sponsor Travel Certification form
- A list of invited staffers
- A blank Employee Pre-Travel Authorization form

You must complete the Employee Pre-Travel Authorization Form and submit it with the enclosed agenda, list of invited staffers, and Private Sponsor Travel Certification form directly to the Senate Ethics Committee (220 Hart) no later than Monday, July 10, 2017. After receiving the completed travel package, the Ethics Committee will review and issue an approval to you or your sponsoring Member. After the trip, you will need to complete a post-travel form that we will email to you after the retreat.

Attendance is by invitation only, with no outside observers or lobbyists. Funding is provided solely by grants from established foundations – no government, individual, foreign, corporate, or special interest money is accepted. The Network is supported by The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The Aspen Education & Society Program maintains autonomy over invitations, materials, and the agenda for the retreat.

The retreat will begin at **12:00 PM on Tuesday, August 8, 2017**, at Wye River Conference Center and will conclude at **1:00 PM on Thursday, August 10, 2017**. Please plan your travel accordingly in order to be present for the duration of the retreat. Dress is casual for all meetings.

The retreat promises to be productive and informative. We look forward to seeing you there.

Warm regards,

Roll:

Ross Wiener

[Handwritten signature]

Daniella Gonzales

Marion Goldstein

Marisa Goldstein

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www.gatesfoundation.org

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To Whom It May Concern:

The foundation is committed to creating greater opportunities for all Americans largely through the attainment of secondary and postsecondary education. By making college and other forms of education both accessible to and meaningful for all, we hope to help break the intergenerational cycle of poverty that prevents families and communities from opportunities to reach their full potential. This grant has been provided to support the general activities of the program. The foundation did not play a significant role in organizing or planning the conference, including, but not limited to the content (implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act), agenda, speakers/experts, or other logistics, and has not been involved in the selection or invitation of participants. All decisions regarding the conference, including the congressional participants invited, were made solely by the Aspen Institute. Foundation funding has not been directly or indirectly earmarked to finance any aspect of this trip and, as defined in the grant agreement, grant funds, may not be earmarked for activities that are considered lobbying under the tax law provisions governing private foundations. Furthermore, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation does not retain or employ a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent.

Regards,

Patrick Murray
Senior Program Officer
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

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Aspen Senior Congressional Education Staff Network Retreat

Planning and Implementation of ESSA: Next Steps for States and Districts

Wye River Conference Center
600 Aspen Drive
Queenstown, MD 21658
Phone: (410) 827-7400

August 8-10, 2017

SENATE CONGRESSIONAL STAFF

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PRIVATE SPONSOR TRAVEL CERTIFICATION FORM

This form must be completed by any private entity offering to provide travel or reimbursement for travel to Senate Members, officers, or employees (Senate Rule 35, clause 2). Each sponsor of a fact-finding trip must sign the completed form. The trip sponsor(s) must provide a copy of the completed form to each invited Senate traveler, who will then forward it to the Ethics Committee with any other required materials. The trip sponsor(s) should **NOT** submit the form directly to the Ethics Committee. Please consult the accompanying instructions for more detailed definitions and other key information.

The Senate Member, officer, or employee **MUST** also provide a copy of this form, along with the appropriate travel authorization and reimbursement form, to the Office of Public Records (OPR), Room 232 of the Hart Building, within thirty (30) days after the travel is completed.

1. Sponsor(s) of the trip (please list all sponsors):
The Aspen Institute (Education & Society Program - E&S Program)
2. Description of the trip: Aspen Institute-sponsored convening for senior Congressional education staffers on planning and implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (see continued response)
3. Dates of travel: August 8-10, 2017
4. Place of travel: Queenstown, MD
5. Name and title of Senate invitees: Please see attached roster
6. I *certify* that the trip fits one of the following categories:
☒ (A) The sponsor(s) are not registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal **and** do not retain or employ registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal **and** no lobbyist or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee *at any point* throughout the trip.
[OR]
☐ (B) The sponsor or sponsors are not registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal, but retain or employ one or more registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal and the trip meets the requirements of Senate Rule 35.2(a)(2)(A)(i) or (ii) (*see question 9*).
7. ☒ I *certify* that the trip will not be financed in any part by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal.
[AND]
☒ I *certify* that the sponsor or sponsors will not accept funds or in-kind contributions earmarked directly or indirectly for the purpose of financing this specific trip from a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal or from a private entity that retains or employs one or more registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal.
8. I *certify* that:
☒ The trip will not in any part be planned, organized, requested, or arranged by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal except for *de minimis* lobbyist involvement.
[AND]
☒ The traveler will not be accompanied on the trip by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal except as provided for by Committee regulations relating to lobbyist accompaniment (*see question 9*).

9. **USE ONLY IF YOU CHECKED QUESTION 6(B)**

I *certify* that if the sponsor or sponsors retain or employ one or more registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal, one of the following scenarios applies:

- ☐ (A) The trip is for attendance or participation in a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and **one** overnight stay) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee *on any segment* of the trip.

OR

- ☐ (B) The trip is for attendance or participation in a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and **two** overnight stays) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee *on any segment* of the trip (*see questions 6 and 10*).

OR

- ☐ (C) The trip is being sponsored only by an organization or organizations designated under § 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee *at any point* throughout the trip.

10. **USE ONLY IF YOU CHECKED QUESTION 9(B)**

If the trip includes two overnight stays, please explain why the second night is practically required for Senate invitees to participate in the travel:

11. ☒ An itinerary for the trip is attached to this form. I *certify* that the attached itinerary is a detailed (hour-by-hour), complete, and final itinerary for the trip.

12. Briefly describe the role of each sponsor in organizing and conducting the trip:

The Aspen Institute is the sole sponsor of this retreat and is solely responsible for the development and execution of the convening. (see continued response)

13. Briefly describe the stated mission of each sponsor and how the purpose of the trip relates to that mission:

The Aspen Institute is an educational and policy studies non-profit organization whose mission is to foster leadership based on enduring values and provide a non-partisan forum for the exchange of ideas.
(see continued response)

14. Briefly describe each sponsor's prior history of sponsoring congressional trips:

The Aspen Institute has a nearly forty year history of conducting non-partisan educational forums, which often include Members of Congress and staff. The E&S Program has been conducting convenings for Congressional education staff for eleven years.

15. Briefly describe the educational activities performed by each sponsor (other than sponsoring congressional trips):

The Aspen Institute holds numerous educational activities, including educational briefings, roundtables, forums, and conferences for a diverse range of attendees including federal and state policymakers, business and organizational leaders, members of the press and the general (see continued response)

16. Total Expenses for Each Participant:

	Transportation Expenses	Lodging Expenses	Meal Expenses	Other Expenses
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good Faith estimate <input type="checkbox"/> Actual Amounts	\$63.45 for mileage	\$234.00 for two nights	\$172.50	\$191.26 conference room fees (includes meeting facilities, set up/take down, cleaning, meeting materials)

17. State whether a) the trip involves an event that is arranged or organized *without regard* to congressional participation or b) the trip involves an event that is arranged or organized *specifically with regard* to congressional participation:

B. The trip is to organized specifically with regard to Congressional staff participation in order to support their learning on how states are implementing ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act).

18. Reason for selecting the location of the event or trip

The location is close to Washington, DC for easy staffer travel and allows faculty members (external experts brought in to support the retreat) to fly into DCA, Dulles or BWI and travel easily to the facility.

19. Name and location of hotel or other lodging facility:

Wye River Conference Center, 600 Aspen Drive, Queenstown, MD 21658

20. Reason(s) for selecting hotel or other lodging facility:

The conference center has sufficient meeting space and lodging to support off-the-record, non-partisan exchanges of ideas and professional learning. The Aspen Institute owns the Wye River Conference Center property.

21. Describe how the daily expenses for lodging, meals, and other expenses provided to trip participants compares to the maximum per diem rates for official Federal Government travel:

Rooms are \$117/day, which reflects the per diem limit.

Meals are \$69.00/day, which reflects the per diem limit.

22. Describe the type and class of transportation being provided. Indicate whether coach, business-class or first class transportation will be provided. If first-class fare is being provided, please explain why first-class travel is necessary:

Transportation is not provided; mileage will be reimbursed for participants' travel by personal car

23. ☒ I represent that the travel expenses that will be paid for or reimbursed to Senate invitees do not include expenditures for recreational activities, alcohol, or entertainment (other than entertainment provided to all attendees as an integral part of the event, as permissible under Senate Rule 35).

24. List any entertainment that will be provided to, paid for, or reimbursed to Senate invitees and explain why the entertainment is an integral part of the event:

None

25. I hereby *certify* that the information contained herein is true, complete and correct. (You must include the completed signature block below for each travel sponsor.):

Signature of Travel Sponsor: _____

Name and Title: Elliot Gerson, Executive Vice President, Policy & Public Programs

Name of Organization: The Aspen Institute

Address: 1 Dupont Circle NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC. 20036

Telephone Number: 202-736-5859

Fax Number: 202-467-0790

E-mail Address: lisa.jones@aspeninst.org

Appendix to Private Sponsor Travel Certification Form

Aspen Institute Senior Congressional Education Staff Network Retreat, August 8-10, 2017

Question 2. Description of the Trip (response continued) – Aspen Institute-sponsored convening for senior Congressional education staffers on planning and implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and next steps for states and districts.

Question 12. Briefly describe the role of each sponsor in organizing and conducting the trip (response continued) – The organization received grant funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to support the Education & Society Program and the Aspen Congressional Staff Network specifically, including providing educational activities such as this convening at the Aspen Institute's conference center in Wye, Maryland. The Foundation did not play a role in organizing or planning the conference, including, but not limited to the content (ESSA), agenda, speakers/experts, attendees or other logistics.

Questions 13. Briefly describe the stated mission of each sponsor and how the purpose of the trip relates to the mission (response continued) – The E&S Program seeks to provide a neutral forum to aid education policymakers in their efforts to improve K-12 public education. The purpose of the trip is to conduct a non-partisan educational retreat that encourages off-the-record, candid exchanges of ideas to support staffers' learning.

Question 15. Briefly describe the educational activities performed by each sponsor (other than sponsoring congressional trips) (response continued) – The Aspen Institute holds numerous educational activities, including educational briefings, roundtables, forums and conferences for a diverse range of attendees including federal and state policymakers, business and organizational leaders, members of the press and the general public. The E&S Program works with federal, state and local education leaders to improve K-12 student achievement, particularly for underserved students.

EMPLOYEE PRE-TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION

Date/Time Stamp:

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Pre-Travel Filing Instructions: Complete and submit this form at least 30 days prior to the travel departure date to the **Select Committee on Ethics in SH-220**. Incomplete and late travel submissions will not be considered or approved. This form must be typed and is available as a fillable PDF on the Committee's website at ethics.senate.gov. Retain a copy of your entire pre-travel submission for your required post-travel disclosure.

Name of Traveler: Matthew Stern

Employing Office/Committee: Senator Alexander / Senate HELP

Private Sponsor(s) (list all): The Aspen Institute (Education & Society Program)

Travel date(s): August 8-10, 2017

Note: If you plan to extend the trip for any reason you must notify the Committee.

Destination(s): Wye River Conference Center 600 Aspen Drive Queenstown, MD 21658

Explain how this trip is specifically connected to the traveler's official or representational duties:

The Aspen Institute Education & Society Program works with federal, state and local education leaders to improve K-12 education. As a Professional Staff member, this trip will support my professional development and understanding of how states are continuing to implement the Every Student Succeeds Act.

Name of accompanying family member (if any): N/A

Relationship to Employee: ☐ Spouse ☐ Child

I certify that the information contained in this form is true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge:

6/28/17
(Date)


(Signature of Employee)

TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISING SENATOR/OFFICER (President of the Senate, Secretary of the Senate, Sergeant at Arms, Secretary for the Majority, Secretary for the Minority, and Chaplain):

I, Senator Lamar Alexander hereby authorize Matthew Stern
(Print Senator's/Officer's Name) (Print Traveler's Name)

an employee under my direct supervision, to accept payment or reimbursement for necessary transportation, lodging, and related expenses for travel to the event described above. I have determined that this travel is in connection with his or her duties as a Senate employee or an officeholder, and will not create the appearance that he or she is using public office for private gain.

I have also determined that the attendance of the employee's spouse or child is appropriate to assist in the representation of the Senate. (signify "yes" by checking box) ☐

7/6/17
(Date)

Lamar Alexander
(Signature of Supervising Senator/Officer)

Aspen Senior Congressional Education Staff Network Retreat

Planning and Implementation of ESSA: Next Steps for States and Districts

Wye River Conference Center
600 Aspen Drive
Queenstown, MD 21658
P: 410-827-7400

August 8-10, 2017

AGENDA

Retreat Goals:

Understand how states are creating and implementing their ESSA plans and how they will monitor implementation at different levels of the system.

Understand states' theories of action around the design of ESSA accountability systems—including the new English language proficiency indicator—and the development of approaches to school improvement.

Engage in active learning and build working relationships with education leaders from the field, as well as with colleagues from different parties and chambers.

Explore potential roles for Congress and the U.S. Department of Education in monitoring and guidance around ESSA implementation.

Tuesday, August 8, 2017

12:00 PM **Arrival and Check-In**

12:30 – 1:00 PM **Lunch**

1:15 – 1:45 PM **Welcome, Overview, and Retreat Objectives**

To guide the retreat's discussion, Congressional staffers and faculty members will begin by sharing their top two learning objectives for the convening.

1:45 – 3:15 PM **Session I: Setting the Context**

Guiding Questions:

How is ESSA state plan development and implementation integrated with other state-level policy priorities? Where are state efforts siloed?

Where did states feel additional flexibility in ESSA? Where have they felt restricted or a greater sense of compliance? What opportunities or flexibilities did states choose not to pursue, and why?

How did feedback from stakeholders inform states' approaches? How did the new requirement to engage governors work in practice?

What lessons have states learned from the peer review process? What have states planning to submit plans in September learned from April submissions?

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What role has the U.S. Department of Education played in this process?
What are the potential implications of future leadership changes (i.e., gubernatorial elections, state chief turnover) on ESSA implementation?

3:15 – 3:45 PM Break and individual reflection

3:45 – 5:00 PM Session II: Designing and Implementing Accountability Systems that Support School Improvement

Guiding Questions:

What are states' theories of action around their accountability systems?
How did SEAs determine what measures to include in their formal accountability systems and what measures to informally report on? What changes might SEAs make in the future? What is the data quality and capacity needed to clearly and accurately report on these measures?
How are states and district planning to move from identifying schools for improvement under the accountability system to improving outcomes for students?

5:00 – 5:20 PM Taking stock: Staff reflections and feedback to guide remaining discussions

6:30 PM Networking Reception with Expert Faculty

Staffers will have the opportunity to network with participants during the reception.

7:00 – 8:30 PM Dinner with Discussion of Earlier Sessions

Wednesday, August 9, 2017

7:30 – 8:30 AM Breakfast

8:30 – 10:15 AM Session III: Assessing English Learners' Progress

Guiding Questions:

- *How are SEAs setting goals and exit criteria for ELs? What measures are they planning to use, and what is the quality of these data? What evidence or data are they using to set these goals, and what feedback have they received?*
How are SEAs prioritizing ELs' growth within the accountability system?
Where are SEAs and LEAs receiving resources and tools to support ELs? What supports are needed?

10:15 – 10:35 AM Break

10:35 AM – 12:00 PM Session IV: Next Steps for School Improvement

Guiding Questions:

What are SEAs' and LEAs' theories of action around school improvement under ESSA? How does this affect their roles and responsibilities?

How are SEAs planning to identify comprehensive support and improvement and targeted support and improvement schools? Will they distribute school improvement funds by formula or by competitive grant? How did they reach these decisions?
How are SEAs using or complying with ESSA's evidence requirements for interventions? What interventions do they plan to use and/or approve?
What supports do LEAs need to support CSI and TSI schools?

12:00 – 1:00 PM

Lunch

1:00 – 2:45 PM

Session V: Deep Dive into State Plans

In small groups, staffers will have the opportunity to examine components of proposed approved accountability systems in two states' ESSA plans,

Guiding Questions:

What is new or different? What has not changed?
What is not captured in the plan that you would want to know about, or think ED should monitor?

2:45 – 3:00 PM

Break

3:00 – 4:45 PM

Session VI: Challenges and Opportunities on the Horizon

Guiding Questions:

- As states and districts begin implementing their plans, what issues do they need to prepare for (i.e., building internal capacity, identifying resources, navigating state and local politics)? How can previous experiences inform their approaches?*
- *What supports will states and districts need to navigate these challenges or take advantage of these opportunities?*
What are the other dynamics (personalized learning, CTE/Perkins, etc.) at play in this space? How do they relate to ESSA—or not?
Are states incorporating school choice in their ESSA plans and implementation?
What role does ED play in incentivizing states to incorporate school choice?

6:15 PM

Networking Reception with Expert Faculty

Staffers will have the opportunity to network with participants during the reception.

7:00 – 8:30 PM

Dinner with Discussion of Earlier Sessions

Thursday, August 10, 2017

7:30 – 8:30 AM

Breakfast

8:30 – 8:45 AM

Staff reflections and feedback to guide remaining discussion

8:45 – 10:30 AM

Session VII: Oversight and Monitoring of Plan Implementation

Guiding Questions:

What are the most important roles for ED? How is this changing over time? Are there things states and districts expect from ED that they are or are not getting?
Are there aspects of the working relationship between ED, states, and districts that can be improved?

What would effective monitoring of ESSA implementation look like? In the past, what has been most helpful for states and districts? Least helpful?

What does this suggest for the specific roles Congress and the U.S. Department of Education should play? How can the Department of Education support states and districts outside of formal oversight and monitoring (i.e., resources, tools, networks)?

What should ED and Congress not do? What about past oversight and monitoring needs to change to ensure successful implementation of ESSA?

- *How can ED ensure compliance with the law, but move states beyond a compliance mindset?*

10:30 – 10:45 AM	Break
10:45 – 11:00 AM	Complete Retreat Evaluation
11:00 – 11:30 AM	Final Observations from Expert Faculty
11:30 – 12:00 PM	Taking Stock: Staff Reflections and Feedback to Guide Next Steps for the Network
12:00 – 1:00 PM	Lunch and Adjourn